

立法會

Legislative Council

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Report of the Panel on Environmental Affairs for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Environmental Affairs for tabling at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 30 June 1999 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to environmental and conservation matters. The terms of reference of the Panel is at **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 14 members. Hon Christine LOH and Hon HUI Cheung-ching were elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Panel respectively. A membership list of the Panel is at **Appendix II**.

Major work

Water

4. During the session, the Panel monitored closely the progress of the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme (SSDS). Members noted that pursuant to the forfeiture of the contracts by the Government due to the unilateral suspension of tunnel works by the original contractor, all the completion contracts for the six tunnels under Stage I of SSDS had been awarded. Since the tunnel works were far behind the original schedule for completion in mid-1997, members urged the Administration to take measures to make up the lost time and to ensure the satisfactory completion of works in 2000 under the revised schedule. As regards Stage II of SSDS, members discussed in detail with the Administration on the pros and cons of the four environmentally acceptable options identified by the consultant. Members took note that after discussion with the Mainland authorities through the Expert Group on Sewage

Disposal, the Administration decided to adopt a configuration which comprised chemical treatment and subsequent disinfection of the sewage followed by discharge via an outfall to the East of Lamma Island and to proceed with the second phase of the Environmental Impact Assessment study for SSDS Stage II.

5. The quality of Dongjiang water was of great concern to members. Together with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works, the Panel critically examined the measures adopted by the Hong Kong and Guangdong authorities to ensure the supply of high quality drinking water for human consumption. Amongst the various improvement measures implemented by the Guangdong authorities, members noted the relocation of the intake pumping station to a few hundred metres upstream at Dongjiang to avoid contamination from a polluted distributory river and the construction of a nitrification plant at the inlet of Shenzhen Reservoir to lower the ammonia content of the raw water. As a long term measure, members endorsed the need to construct a closed aqueduct from Dongjiang to Shenzhen to replace the existing open channel and to control polluting activities along the source water.

Air

6. The Panel worked closely with the Administration to look into effective ways to tackle the deteriorating air quality. As diesel vehicle emissions were identified as the major source of air pollution, members considered the introduction of measures, such as tightening vehicle fuel and emission standards, strengthening enforcement against smoky vehicles, and improving emission testing devices, useful but inadequate to solve the problem at root. To find alternative clean vehicles to replace part of the diesel vehicle fleet should be the way forward. With reference to overseas experience and in the light of the results of the 12-month Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Taxis Trial Scheme, the Panel conducted a series of joint meetings with the Panel on Transport to examine the necessary supporting measures to be put into place to enable a smooth switch of diesel to LPG taxis. The provision of sufficient LPG filling stations, LPG workshops and mechanics, the competitive prices of LPG taxis and LPG, and the affordable operating costs of LPG taxis were identified by members as prerequisites for a successful switch. For the purpose of expediting the switch but without jeopardising the taxi trade, members strongly urged the Administration to provide financial incentives to motivate taxi drivers to replace diesel with LPG taxis.

7. At the regional level, the Panel called on the Administration to co-operate with its Guangdong counterparts to improve air quality in the entire Pearl River Delta area. To this end, members supported the conduct of two studies by the two sides on priority areas, namely acid rain, nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution, and photochemical smog. Based on the results of these studies which were expected to be available by the end of year 2000, the Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental Protection Liaison Group would formulate control strategies to tackle air pollution in the Pearl River Delta Region.

8. The Panel considered the control of indoor air pollution no less important.

Members noted with concern the findings of the consultancy study on “Indoor Air Pollution in Offices and Public Places” which revealed relatively high level of pollutants, in particular carbon dioxide, in the buildings surveyed. Members exchanged views with the Administration on its proposed control strategies, namely the development of a set of 3-level Indoor Air Quality Objectives, the issue of a Code of Practice on measures to be adopted by building management for the purpose of achieving good indoor air quality, and the setting up of an Inter-departmental Indoor Air Quality Management Group to co-ordinate the work and responsibilities of various Government departments in this aspect. Noting the Administration’s intention to rely on self-regulation of building management to achieve good indoor air quality, members urged the Administration to rethink whether this was the best approach to implement the proposed control system, taking account of the outcome of public consultation.

Noise

9. In view of the spate of complaints about aircraft noise upon the commissioning of the Chek Lap Kok Airport in July 1998, the Panel conducted three meetings with the Administration and met residents’ associations to examine the severity of the problem and to identify mitigation measures. Despite the findings that the noise standards set for the new airport had not been violated, members requested and the Administration agreed to implement measures to reduce aircraft noise but without compromising flight safety. These measures included arranging aircrafts arriving after midnight to land from the southeast, subject to acceptable wind direction and strength, to reduce the number of aircrafts overflying Shatin, Kwai Ching, Tsuen Wan and Tsing Yi, and aircrafts departing to use the southbound route via the West Lamma Channel to avoid overflying Hung Hom, Causeway Bay, North Point and Chai Wan. Noting that the second runway was scheduled for operation in mid-1999, members called on the Administration to consult the residents concerned on the new flight paths and to adopt the ones which would have the least noise impact.

10. The Panel had extensive discussions with the Administration on the proposed legislative amendments to hold the top management of a body corporate liable for noise offences committed by the body corporate. Whilst taking note that a significant number of repeated offenders were bodies corporate, members considered it important to conduct wide consultation with the affected trades and persons and to define clearly the meaning of top management before proceeding with the proposed legislative amendments.

Waste

11. Together with environmental groups and representatives of the waste recycling trade, the Panel examined the broad waste management policy for the next ten years as set out in the Waste Reduction Framework Plan. Given the land constraints in Hong Kong, members agreed that waste reduction and recycling should be the way forward. The collapse of a large local waste paper company aroused

members' grave concern about the survival of the waste recycling industry. Members were mindful of the Government's international trade obligations under the World Trade Organization concerning the restriction on provision of subsidies to a particular trade. Nevertheless, to avoid the disposal of a large amount of recyclable waste in landfills, members strongly urged the Administration to assist the waste recycling industry by providing suitable land at a concessionary premium and introducing short-term and long-term measures to facilitate its operation.

12. Of particular concern to the Panel was the management of construction and demolition (C&D) waste. Members were disappointed with the passivity and inertia on the part of the Administration, who was a major producer of C&D waste, to introduce effective measures to tackle the pressing problem. Members unanimously requested the Administration to come up expeditiously with concrete proposals to reduce the generation of C&D waste at source, discourage the dumping of public fill at landfills, and encourage the recycling and reuse of C&D waste. Together with the construction trade and the Administration, the Panel would hold further meetings in July 1999 with a view to working out practicable means to mitigate the problem.

13. For the purpose of ensuring hazard-free management of clinical waste from collection to transportation to disposal, the Panel took note of the proposed introduction of a clinical waste control system by phases. Public and private hospitals and government clinics would be subject to control under the first phase of the scheme, whereas small waste producers were expected to exercise self-regulation. Members called on the Administration to work closely with the medical profession to devise a set of practicable and workable Code of Practice on disposal of clinical waste which could be observed not only by major waste producers but also small waste producers.

14. From July 1998 to June 1999, the Panel held a total of 26 meetings of which nine were joint meetings with other Panels. The Panel also held two informal meetings with the Advisory Council on the Environment and one informal meeting with Sir Crispin TICKELL, a renowned environmental expert, to exchange views on local and global environmental concerns.

Legislative Council Secretariat

15 June 1999

Legislative Council

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to environmental and conservation affairs.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on related policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in the relevant policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To examine and to report on any major issues of wide public concern in the relevant policy area as referred by the Council or House Committee or as raised by the Panel itself.

Legislative Council Secretariat

11 July 1998

立法會
環境事務委員會
Legislative Council
Panel on Environmental Affairs

委員名單
Membership List

陸恭蕙議員(主席)	Hon Christine LOH (Chairman)
許長青議員(副主席)	Hon HUI Cheung-ching (Deputy Chairman)
何鍾泰議員	Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
吳清輝議員	Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
陳智思議員	Hon Bernard CHAN
陳榮燦議員	Hon CHAN Wing-chan
梁智鴻議員	Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP
梁劉柔芬議員	Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, JP
黃容根議員	Hon WONG Yung-kan
楊耀忠議員	Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
劉江華議員	Hon LAU Kong-wah
劉健儀議員	Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP
蔡素玉議員	Hon CHOY So-yuk
羅致光議員	Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

合共: 14 位議員
Total: 14 Members

日期: 1998 年 7 月 14 日
Date: 14 July 1998